

EAST TIMOR

AND THE 1986

ALP National Conference

Putting the Timorese first

This leaflet proposes modest changes to existing Party policy which reaffirm the primacy of the East Timorese views in any actions or decisions concerned with their future.

THE 1984 National Conference passed a resolution on East Timor which unambiguously indicated:

- continuing ALP concern at the situation in East Timor;
- there has been no act of self-determination in the territory;
- the need for continued international scrutiny;
- the need for Australian Government support for international initiatives aimed at achieving a solution.

This resolution, which so clearly indicated that the issue was far from settled, was supported by the Right and Centre factions.

But 12 months later, the Prime Minister announced on Indonesian television that Australia recognised Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.

This statement on sovereignty:

- did not reflect the spirit of ALP policy;
- had never been previously stated by the Government in all its comments on East Timor since March 1983;
- was done without any prior consultation with Federal caucus or the wider Party.

Recognition of sovereignty effectively:

- accedes to Jakarta's claim that East Timor is its 'internal affair';

- undermines the legitimacy of the U.N. Secretary-General's efforts to find a "just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement of the question."

ALP policy specifically supports the Secretary-General's efforts. Portugal, a principal party to the U.N. talks on Timor, recently confirmed that the sovereignty statement was no help to a resolution of the issue.

The 1984 resolution, while containing important proposals, failed to reaffirm long-standing ALP support for the continued right of the East Timorese to self-determination. This failure opened the door for the sovereignty statement.

Fraser Government recognition of sovereignty in 1979 was never any help to the Timorese and was opposed by the then Labor Opposition. Labor Government recognition of sovereignty will not assist the East Timorese with the main issue — their right to have a say in their own future.

Rather than agreeing to rubber-stamp the Government's unilateral decision on sovereignty, the 1986 National Conference offers the opportunity for the ALP to reassert a principled position on East Timor which will help keep open the possibility of a just solution.

Concern continues

ACTU

'Congress recognises the inalienable right of the East Timorese people to self-determination and independence . . .'

ACTU Congress, September 1985

Amnesty International

'The evidence shows a persistent pattern of human rights violations extending over a period of nine years . . .'

London, 1985

Putting the Timorese first

1984 resolution

• Words in **Bold** indicate phrases which need changing.

The ALP expresses its continuing concern at the situation in East Timor, particularly its officially stated objection to the fact that **the former Portuguese colony was incorporated** without the East Timorese people having been given an adequate opportunity to express their own wishes through an internationally supervised act of self-determination.

The ALP indicates grave concern at **reports of renewed fighting in East Timor and about the threats to human life and safety there**, and calls on the Indonesian Government to give free access to humanitarian relief teams, to international organisations such as Red Cross, Amnesty and the Commission of Jurists, and to allow an independent international mission to enter the territory to make an independent and impartial report on conditions.

Accordingly the ALP calls on the Australian Labor Government to give active support to international initiatives, that have the aim of achieving a settlement of the Timor problem. Specifically the Government should support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to bring about a solution.

Note: The 1984 Resolution on East Timor also contained four paragraphs on the general Australia-Indonesia relationship. As East Timor is not recognised by the United Nations as part of Indonesia, it is proposed the issue of the Australia-Indonesia relationship be the subject of a separate resolution in 1986.

Proposed 1986 resolution

• Words in **Bold** indicate proposed alterations.

The ALP expresses its continuing concern at the situation in East Timor, particularly its objection to the **forced annexation of the territory**(1) and the fact that the East Timorese people have not been given an adequate opportunity to express their own wishes through an internationally supervised act of self-determination.

The ALP indicates grave concern at **the continuing pattern of military repression and resistance and at continuing reports of human rights violations**(2). The ALP calls on the Indonesian Government to give free access to humanitarian relief teams, to international organisations such as International Red Cross, Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists, and to allow an independent international mission to enter the territory to make an independent and impartial report on conditions **with particular emphasis on the views and aspirations of the East Timorese people**.(3)

Accordingly the ALP calls on the Australian Labor Government to give active support to international initiatives that have the aim of achieving a **just**(4) settlement of the Timor problem. Specifically the Government should support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to bring about a **political** solution to the conflict based on the **UN-recognised right of the East Timorese people to self-determination**. **Australia should insist that these efforts include direct consultation with the East Timorese people, including the Fretilin-led resistance inside East Timor**.(5)

Concern continues

UN Secretary-General

'It is my sincere hope that . . . the next phase of the talks . . . will prepare the ground for a just, comprehensive and internationally acceptable settlement of the question of East Timor.'

Perez de Cuellar, Progress Report, September 1985

Pacific Trade Union Forum

'Strongly recommends that the UN and its member states give full endorsement to the negotiating process started in 1982 . . . making it plain that the East Timorese people including the Fretilin-led resistance must be fully involved in the search for a political solution.'

PTUF Congress, Auckland, May 1986

US Congress

'We continue to be deeply concerned about the human tragedy in East Timor.'

125 Congressional Reps. to President Reagan, 29 April 1986

Indonesian Press

East Timor has 21,833 orphans, 7,900 cripples, 11,231 homeless children, 17,403 elderly people without sustenance, 13,701 uncared-for widows, and 2,800 uncared-for people in other categories.

Suara Karya, 25 April 1985

Portugal

'We would like to thank the Labor Party for its efforts aimed at supporting the international initiatives that might contribute to a solution to the problem of East Timor. However, we consider that the statements of Prime Minister Hawke affirming that Australia recognises the sovereignty of Indonesia over East Timor, as well as the understanding between the Australian Government and Jakarta over the exploitation of 'Timor Gap' oil, do not contribute at present to facilitate the resolution of this question.'

Anibal Cavaco Silva, Prime Minister of Portugal, 19 March 1986, letter to Australian Labor Parliamentarians.

What changes are needed — and why

1. The phrase, "former Portuguese colony was incorporated", in the 1984 resolution has allowed the Government to infer that Party policy was consistent with recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.

Describing the takeover as a "forced annexation" more accurately describes the factual nature of the takeover and is more consistent with the spirit of existing Party policy.

2. In mid-1984, an Indonesian military offensive was in full swing, the fourth such offensive since 1975.

While there has been no major offensive in 1985-6, Indonesia's 10,000 combat troops in the territory are regularly engaged in clashes with the Fretilin resistance. The climate of fear, killings, arbitrary arrest, enforced resettlement, detentions and restrictions on movement, communication and expression continue.

3. The danger in restricting the findings of an international mission to East Timor to issues of material conditions in the territory is that it opens the door to legitimizing Indonesia's claim that economic development is a substitute for the right of political self-determination.

The views and aspirations of the East Timorese must be paramount in any investigation of conditions in East Timor because these have been, and will continue to be,

key determinants of what happens on the ground in the territory.

4. Any 'solution' which is not just, will not be a solution. An unjust settlement like the 1969 "Act of Free Choice" in West Irian will do nothing to solve the issue.

The U.N. Secretary-General reported to the United Nations in 1985 his hope that UN talks about East Timor would prepare the ground for a "just, comprehensive and lasting settlement." It would be appropriate for ALP policy to echo those sentiments.

5. Australia should promote a solution based on the principle of the right to self-determination.

There will be no just or lasting solution if the East Timorese have not participated in processes concerned with East Timor's future. Armed resistance has continued for over ten years and is still a major determinant of events in East Timor.

Failure to include opponents of integration in processes aimed at a solution would not only be morally wrong but, in quite practical terms, would obviously fail. Timorese opposed to the annexation would continue their resistance if a solution did not respect their wishes and aspirations. The only practical way to ensure a genuine solution is to insist on the participation of the opponents of annexation in the diplomatic processes.

Conflict continues

'Indonesian soldiers lack the will to fight . . . and act only on the defensive, while the resistance is on the offensive with surprise attacks against occupied villages and the camps of the Indonesian soldiers.'

Letter from Dili, 12 May 1986

'We, the sons and daughters of the Timorese people, are not struggling against the Indonesian people. On the contrary we believe our struggle against the Indonesian regime and its apparatus of oppression will not only liberate the East Timorese people but also indirectly help the Indonesian people.'

Statement, Youth of East Timor, 9 March 1986

'We do not ask the Australian people to supply us with recruits and arms. We simply ask for their moral support in our struggle.'

Timorese Catholic Youth organisation, 22 January 1986

'On 3-4 May (1986) our guerillas attacked Uma Desa (Suku) killing 3 in reprisal for the bad treatment such as torture, gaoling of civilians and rape of women of minor age . . .'

Letter from Dili, 12 May 1986

'After 10 years of difficult struggle we must . . . march hand in hand always conscious of the difficulties that surround us, but firm in the determination to continue to struggle for our inalienable rights and confident in our victory, difficult though it be.'

Xanana Gusmao, Fretilin leader, letter to civilian Timorese, 23 January 1986

'Late in April (1986) Fretilin ambushed a vehicle, shot the driver and took 25 million rupiah (over \$A30,000). The Indonesian soldiers knew the positions of our guerillas but refused to counter-attack out of fear and discontent.'

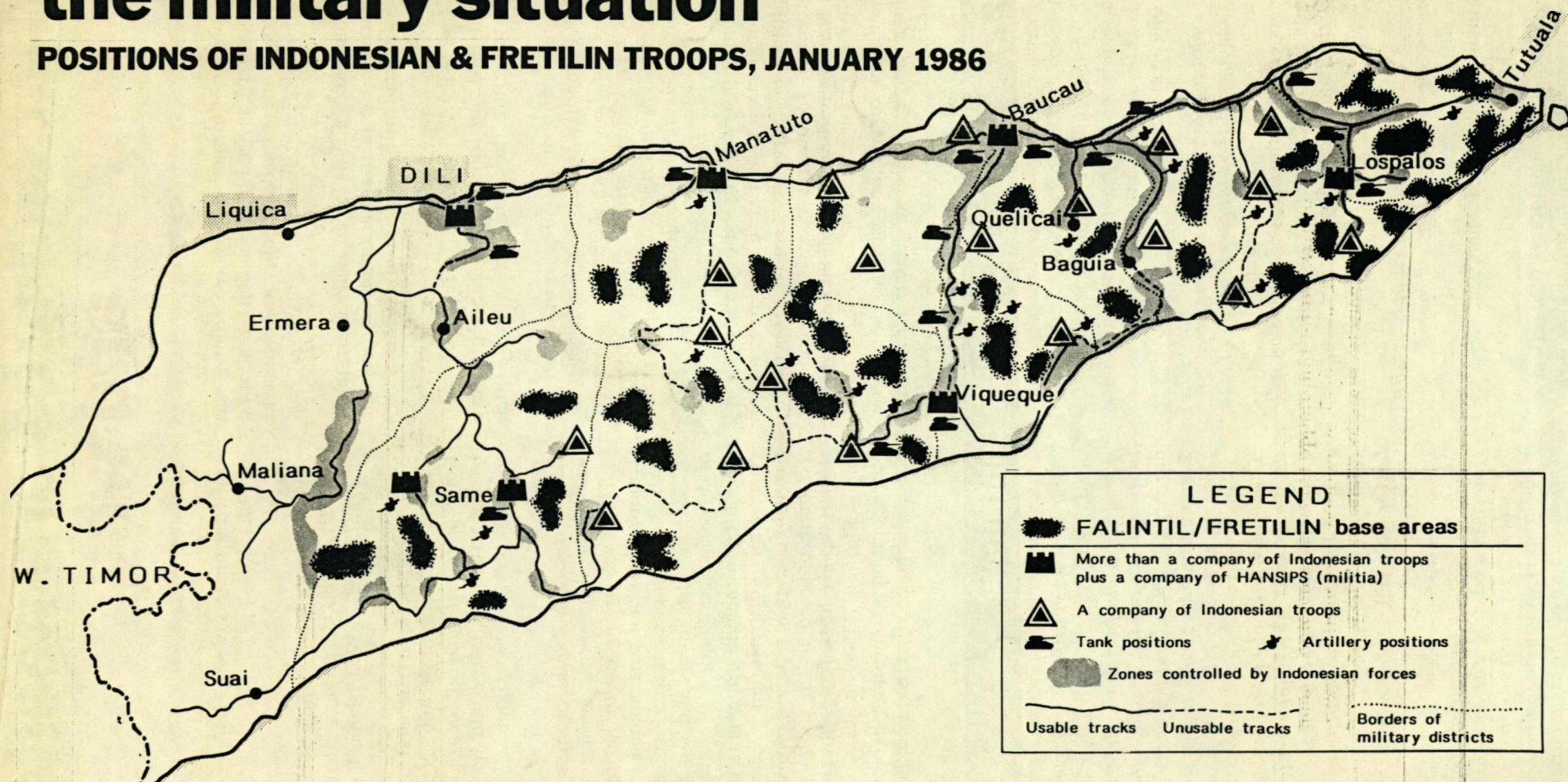
Letter from Dili, 12 May 1986

'Mario Carrascalao (Indonesian Governor of East Timor), in a meeting with some of our comrades in Dili, said he very much admired Fretilin's organisation in the areas of education, culture and production (of food) and above all the organisation of guerilla war tactics.'

Letter from Dili, 12 May 1986

EAST TIMOR: the military situation

POSITIONS OF INDONESIAN & FRETILIN TROOPS, JANUARY 1986



Sources:

Disposition of Indonesian forces: information from Fretilin, January 1986, smuggled out of East Timor.

Disposition of Fretilin forces: information from Indonesian intelligence report captured by Fretilin mid 1985. (Fretilin has confirmed its broad accuracy).

Tapol, May 1986